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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 OTTAWA 001028

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SUBJECT: EXCHANGING VIEWS ON THE OAS AND THE SUMMIT OF THE
AMERICAS WITH CANADA

REF: OTTAWA 976

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary. In meetings at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) on July 18, U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States Hector E. Morales, Jr. emphasized his hopes of maintaining strong coordination and collaboration with Canada on hemispheric issues and expressed his appreciation for ongoing Canadian cooperation bilaterally and multilaterally. He called for improving the OAS' efficiency and pruning its various mandates as members consider the budget. He exchanged views on some of the logistical and substantive challenges facing the April 2009 Summit of the Americas in Port of Spain, and agreed on the importance of working together to help Trinidad and Tobago organize a successful Summit. End Summary.

Latin American Bureau

¶2. (C) Ambassador Morales met on July 18 with DFAIT's Director General for Latin American and Caribbean Affairs James Lambert, joined by Acting Director of the Inter-American Affairs Division Leonard Beaulne, Coordinator of the Summit of the Americas Paul Williams, OAS Coordinator Mandy Sheldrake, and PolMinCouns. Ambassador Morales highlighted the importance the U.S. placed on improving the OAS' efficiency and effectiveness, citing the need to prioritize its work and to review its more than 800 mandates, with a medium-to-long term view of pruning some of them. He underscored that the U.S. and Canada together paid much more than half of the budget, unlike the Inter-American Development Bank, for which the borrowers contributed the majority share. He described this situation as "not in the long-term organizational interests" of the OAS. He called for more efficiency and accountability by the OAS. DG Lambert expressed full agreement, while underscoring the continued importance of the OAS, notably its regional offices and its electoral mandates. He nonetheless admitted the OAS' "mandate creep," but could offer no formula on how to shape an effective response. On the OAS budget, Ambassador Morales called for a possible rethink of who is paying how much, underscoring that the numerous observers did not contribute to the regular budget, yet were present at all council and committee meetings. He stated that ongoing budget discussions needed to include a review of efficiency and quota issues.

¶3. (C) DG Lambert lamented that members of the OAS often "tiptoed" around key issues -- such as democracy in Venezuela -- and insisted that Canada had joined the OAS in the 1990s to help bring "multilateral professionalism" to the OAS, not to "Latin Americanize Canada." He said that the Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper was especially interested in improving the OAS' administrative efficiency and in promoting democracy throughout the hemisphere. Ambassador Morales also voiced concern about "unbalance" in

the OAS, citing the U.S. need to add a footnote about the right of self defense in the OAS resolution about Colombia's March 1 raid against a FARC camp in Ecuador. He insisted that it remained important for the OAS to speak out about terrorism, human rights, and democracy. Both DG Lambert and Ambassador Morales expressed some concerns about a sometime lack of balance also by the OAS Secretary General, and agreed that the OAS must fairly represent all constituencies, not just Latin American ones. Ambassador Morales noted that Qjust Latin American ones. Ambassador Morales noted that sub-regional organizations could play helpful roles, but only if they complement what the OAS and IDB are doing, not compete with them.

14. (C) Ambassador Morales condemned the FARC as a genuine terrorist organization that posed a real threat to the region. He explained that Colombia will soon publicly call for the world also to condemn it (as the U.S. has done privately -- reftel), and called for pro-active support for the Colombian President. He cited OAS as well as UN obligations for members to take action, especially in not providing safe haven for the FARC. DG Lambert voiced general agreement.

15. (C) DG Lambert praised Ambassador Morales' thoughtful letter to Trinidad's National Coordinator and Special Envoy to the Americas and the Commonwealth Luis Alberto Rodriguez on its draft declaration for the Fifth Summit of the Americas," and said that Canada was also working with him on this, but called it a "monster declaration" with "unrealistic goals," especially on energy and climate change. He added that PM Harper had promised PM Manning of Canada's willingness to "backstop." He stressed the importance of

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ensuring a successful Summit in 2009 or else there might never be another one. Ambassador Morales explained that he had briefed both U.S. Presidential campaigns on the 2009 Summit, and advisors in both camps said they would need a "compelled case" to attend in order to avoid possible embarrassment, while agreeing that a successful summit would be an excellent opportunity to lay out the new Administration's vision for the region. DG Lambert added that Canada would support making the Summits more regular, probably every two years. Ambassador Morales warned that any effort by Trinidad and/or Venezuela to include Cuba in the 2009 Summit would make it a "non-starter" for any U.S. President.

16. (C) Ambassador Morales expressed high appreciation for Canada's important role in the region, especially Haiti, on its own as well as working with the U.S. and also through the OAS.

North America Bureau

17. (C) In a separate meeting with Assistant Deputy Foreign Minister for North America and Summit of the Americas sherpa Peter Boehm and Assistant Deputy Foreign Minister for the Americas Strategy Alexandra Bugailiskis (whom Boehm indicated would likely inherit his Summit portfolio once he departs for his new assignment as Ambassador to Germany in August), Ambassador Morales underscored that there could not be a repeat of unsuccessful previous Summit in Argentina but that Trinidad was well aware of the need to "reinvigorate" the Summits. He expressed optimism but asked for continued Canadian assistance to make the 2009 Summit successful. He also thanked Canada for its excellent cooperation not only on the Summit but also more generally within the OAS. ADM Boehm described the importance of multilateral cooperation for Canada, in part as a counterweight to its close relationship with the U.S. He agreed that Trinidad needed to reach out for more input, but said that a "Friends of the Chair" mechanism might quickly become unwieldy. He shared a draft of his short reply to National Coordinator Rodriguez on the

draft declaration, and affirmed that Canadian views largely coincided with those of the U.S. He said that he fully agreed that members must convince PM Manning not to try to include Cuba in the 2009 Summit. Ambassador Morales pointed out that 34 democracies had agreed at the 2001 Quebec Summit on the summit process and how to add new participants, and now was not the time to contemplate circumventing these procedures to include Cuba. ADM Boehm agreed that there was "nothing to gain" from Cuba's participation.

¶18. (C) ADM Boehm said that Trinidad had originally tried to "outsource" logistics for the Summit to Canada, but the government demurred, offering instead in-kind assistance and advice, including a recent visit that came up with several pages of recommendations, which he shared with Ambassador Morales. He noted especially that National Coordinator Rodriguez needed to work more closely with Trinidad's Ministry of Foreign Affairs on protocol. He added that Trinidad would definitely also need help on security issues. Ambassador Morales described some assistance the USG was also providing Trinidad. ADM Boehm confirmed that it was in our "collective interest" to see the 2009 Summit succeed.

¶19. (C) ADM Boehm and ADM Bugailiskis both agreed on the utility of a strategic review of the OAS' budget and mandates.

¶10. (U) Ambassador Morales has cleared this message.

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